

MEMOIRS

OF THE CELEBRATED

Lady Viscountess WILBRIHAMMON,

alias Mollineux, alias Irving,

Countess of Normandy, and Baroness Wilmington,

The greatest IMPOSTRESS of the present Age.

Hewitt J. Alderman

BIRMINGHAM:

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J. H. P.

T O T H E
R E A D E R.

I HAVE, by different publications, endeavoured to caution the public against Impostors, and in some instances (as far as those publications have extended) with success; though, contrary to my expectation, I have not met with those returns I did expect from public gratitude, in the sale thereof, and which have been principally owing to the mean artifice of pretended friends. I have once more ventured on the publication of the Adventures of as great and successful an Impostress as I ever met with; indeed superior to every one, considering her as acting alone, and without assistants, except such as she by her own artifice procured and deceived.

I have sent this into the world at as small a price as such a publication can be expected at, that by a general circulation its uses may be more extensive and salutary. The account of the place of her birth, or who were her parents, I have never yet heard for a certainty: The matter as it came to me I have given the public; and am,

Their faithful

humble Servant,

J. H. ALDERMAN.

Coventry, May 1778.

S I R,
YOUR known diligence and activity as a Magistrate, makes me hope you will readily undertake to unravel a very improbable story, told by a young woman, who lodges at the Rose and Crown in Coventry, and who has been in a post-chaise to Lady Leigh's, Lord Craven, &c. and to-day came here. If she is an impostor, it will be an act of justice to the public to detect her; if (as she appears to be) she is disordered in her senses, it will be an act of charity to get friends to take care of her. Should you think proper to put her into safe hands till you can hear from those who (she says) know her, I will defray whatever expences you shall think reasonable for her board, &c. The inclosed is the copy of a letter she shewed here, which has a post-mark upon it, and therefore seems genuine.

Your humble Servant.

M. D.

To Mr. Alderman Hewitt, Coventry.

LORD Denbigh's compliments to Mr. Alderman Hewitt; wishes he would give himself the trouble to step to the Rose and Crown, and examine a young woman, who calls herself Miss Wilberham, and a woman of fashion and fortune. My Lord thinks her either mad or an impostor; if the former, she ought to be taken care of, and notice

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sent to her friends where she is; if the latter, she deserves to be punished. Lord Denbigh thinks no one so proper to find out this mystery as Mr. Alderman Hewitt, who, if he thinks her a proper object, will give her the inclosed Guinea; but if not desires he will give it to Dr. Harrold, who will return it to his Lordship. Lord Denbigh would be glad of an answer to this, when convenient."

Upon receipt of the foregoing letters, I immediately repaired to the Rose and Crown Inn, and staid in waiting, agreeable to the request of the Lord and Lady, until the return of the Lady Viscountess, who, upon alighting from her chaise, immediately retired to her bed-chamber; upon being informed thereof by the landlord, I desired my compliments, that I was below, and had a message to deliver her from a Lady. Upon her coming into the parlour, I desired her to be seated, and then informed her I had a present to make her; but in the first place expected that she would permit me to ask her a few questions, which I must request direct answers to, with respect to her parents and the place of her birth; to which she reply'd, that her name was Wilbrihammon, and her father lived at Corby-Castle, near Carlisle, in the county of Cumberland; that her father was a Roman Catholick, and her mother, who was lately dead, was a Protestant; the occasion of her leaving her father, after the death of her mother he attempted to compel her to change her religion and become a Catholick, to avoid which she had made her escape from the house of her father, about six weeks before that period, and had been on a visit to Mr. Strickland's, at Sizer-Hall, Lord Mollineux's, and Lord Derby's, and was on her way to the Duke of Leeds on a visit likewise, being very intimate in the family; said, that her father and mother visited and were visited by all the principal families in Carlisle and Cumberland; that she had been lately married to a Honourable Mr. Irving, but did not then know where the Gentleman was at that time. I then requested her to name the principal families in her father's neighbourhood she had any knowledge of; she mentioned a person that lived at Brough-upon-Stainmore; I told her, that was a very distant place from Corby-Castle or Carlisle, and therefore desired her to name a person resident in the city of Carlisle, or the neighbourhood of Corby; she then appearing

pearing confused, I asked if she had written evidences of what she pretended to be, upon which she drew out a pocket-book filled with papers; I desired she would permit me to look at any one of them that were not improper to be exposed; she then assumed the countenance of a hypocritical Methodist, and said, she trusted in her dear Lord Jehovah, and was not afraid what man could do unto her, and with a reluctant attitude held forth a letter, which I took; upon the opening of which a loose paper dropt out, a certificate of marriage at Franckam or Farnham, in the county of Surry.* Having a thorough knowledge of the principal people in her pretended neighbourhood of her father, I asked her if she knew several principal families I then named, but she appeared totally ignorant of any one; I observed that she had produced a contradiction as to her being a wife of Mr. Irving; that I well knew that Mr. Warwick and not Wilbrihammon, lived at Corby-Castle; that another letter she produced was a further proof of detection, being a letter from the vagrant-carrier's wife of Coventry, at whose house she lodged;† and that in a few words I believed her to be an arrant impostress, and that I should commit her as such. Being interrupted by the landlord's coming very abruptly into the room and desiring to speak with me without, in compliance with his request I attended him; he believing her to be the real person of quality she stiled herself, being within hearing when I mentioned my determination to commit her, he came in with an amazing look of fear and apprehension: I was surprized to find instead of intelligence to be received, it was to be exhorted to take care of my proceedings, for she was certainly a woman of great family and fortune; I thanked him and returned to her examination; another certificate of marriage dropt from the letter-case, of her being married at Whitechapel. Being fully satisfied that I had no Viscountess, no Lady Wilbrihammon, no Miss Mollineux, nor the Honourable Mrs. Irving,

Frensham, Dec. 18, 1764.

* Thomas Boxall, Br. and Sarah-Charlotta-Lewisfearn Willsbrowson, Spr. both of the parish of Frensham, and in the county of Surry, were married by the publication of banns, in the parish church of Frensham, aforesaid, on the seventeenth day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and sixty-four, as appeareth by the register of the said parish, of which this is a true copy, by
RICHARD BRIDGER, Minister.

† See the letter No. 4, hereafter inserted.

Irving, before me, I did not think ceremony any longer necessary with a common vagrant or base impostress; I seized her letter-case, upon which was wrote in gilt letters Richard Frith, Esq; of Crowton-Hall, Cheshire. I asked who that Gentleman was? she answered, her faithful steward, and with her hypocritical face, began in the stile of your pretenders to sanctity, called upon heaven and all the holy angels to protect her. I desired to know if she had any friends she could send to for a character; she immediately mentioned the late Lord Strange, George-Lewis Scott, Esq; and as a particular friend, and who she was sure would give her a character, George Jackson, Esq; of the Navy-Office, and gave me a direction to that Gentleman. I then in a few words informed her, I was going for London that night, should make out her mittimus, and leave her in custody, not commit her, provided the landlord, who seemed to have a high opinion of her, would be security, (until I wrote from town) for her being forth-coming, who was all the while intreating in her behalf. In compliance with the noble lady's request, to shew her all that tenderness and humanity, until I had made a farther inquiry, I left her in custody and care of a constable at the inn, upon assurances given by the landlord; whom, agreeable to the noble Lady's letter, I promised her expences should be paid.

As the curious reader may be desirous of having a description of her Ladyship, as she appeared on her examination before me, I will oblige them with it:

“ She was of a low stature, pale or fallow complexion, a little deformed, a speck or kell over one eye, had on a nankeen riding-habit, white hat, blue feather and cockade, with gold tassels, said she was about 20 years of age.”

Amongst other papers, the following letter was found; by which it appears she was making an attempt upon the Honourable writer, to deceive and impose upon him, but it doth not appear she succeeded.

MADAM,

M A D A M,

Idsworth, 29th Nov. 1765.

MR. Lantom last post sent me your letter inclosed,

* * * * *

[This middle part is torn out.]

can be of any use in reconciling you to your friends, I will with pleasure do all in my power, as I pity your distress,

And am, Madam,

Your most obedient Servant,

(Sign'd)

C H A R L E S D O R M E R.

Direct

To the Hon. Charles Dormer,
at Idsworth, by Midhurst bag,
Suffex.

To

The Hon. Miss Wilbriham,
to be left with Mr. Barker,
at Lord Strange's,
Grosvenor-Square.

Upon my return from London, I found the following letter, which is an account of what happened after my leaving Coventry.

S I R,

Newnham, 18th June, 1766.

Y E S T E R D A Y morning I sent for Mrs. Bott, the person whom Lady Wilberham, alias Wilberhamman, said she was so well known to; but on examining her, I soon found every particular exactly contrary to what she told you; Mrs. Bott having no other knowledge of her Ladyship, than on Christmas-day last she came to a public-house just by her, the sign of the Nag's-Head, in a very shabby camblet riding habit, and said that she had come from town in a machine, and was on her way to Lord Derby's, who was her uncle,

b

and

and to Lord Elfrange's, who was her cousin. But she (Mrs. Bott) had doubts of her being an impostor then, notwithstanding she kept her in her house for about two or three days, and put a little money into her pocket when she departed; and now on her return to Coventry, has attempted to renew her acquaintance with the said Mrs. Bott.

Don't be surprized when I tell you that she is gone off. The landlord at the Rose and Crown suffered her to go away in his post-chaise about half past 10 o'clock yesterday morning: She prevailed upon him by a promise that she would send him his demands back by the post-boy, who was to take her through Warwick to Banbury. My Lord is very much dissatisfied with the landlord on this affair, and my Lady much disappointed.

I cannot help thinking it strange in him to suffer her to pass off in this manner, as it's no act of humanity; because if she is actually an object of care, and somewhat disordered in her mind, you would have found that out most certainly; if she proves on the contrary, it must be wrong in him to give her an opportunity to escape justice.

However, I do suppose you will think her recoverable still. Her Ladyship wishes to be satisfied about her; therefore my Lord flatters himself he shall hear from you to-morrow.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble Servant,

(Sign'd) R. J.

P. S. She vended many imprecations against you for detaining her pocket-book, and attempting to examine her Ladyship. My Lord thinks the landlord should be taken notice of: She was three pounds eleven shillings and six pence in his debt when she left Coventry, he says, which money she promised to send by the boy when he returned home.

To
Mr. Ald. Hewitt,
Coventry.

THE

THE FOLLOWING
EXTRAORDINARY ACCOUNT

O F

This Grand Adventurefs's Impositions

O N

A Family in the Parish of Great-Budworth, in the
County of Chester,

Is taken principally from P A P E R S found upon her.

MEMOIRS

VOLUME 10

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M E M O I R S

O F

Lady WILBRIHAMMON, &c.

IN the month of January, 1766, she alighted from a stage coach, at the inn known by the sign of the Cock, at Great Budworth in Cheshire, very shabby dressed; after resting herself, and obtaining an account of the families in that neighbourhood, she went to the house of a wheel-wright, near to the inn, and after relating a most sorrowful story of being a daughter of a nobleman near London, that her father wanted to compel her to marry a nobleman contrary to her inclination, that her mother was dead, and having an independent fortune which she should possess upon her coming to age in the May following, had made her escape, resolving to be absent until that time; if Mr. Deane (the name of the wheel-wright) would conceal her in his house, and let her board with his family, she would give him a very considerable sum, sufficient to live upon without trade the remainder of the life of himself and wife; shewed him several letters from noblemen and persons of the first rank, particularly a letter from the Honourable Charles Dormer, of Grove-Park, with a direction upon it for her Ladyship at Lord Estrange's, Grovesnor-square; and intended to marry some other young nobleman as soon as she was at age, for whom she had the greatest affection. The family of the Deanes heard the wonderful relation with all attention; but wanting faith, they gave her an absolute refusal. Her Ladyship took her leave, and went to the house of a miller, about one mile farther in that parish, where, being late when she arrived, she continued all night, and did the miller and his wife the honour to lie with them in the same bed; to whom she related the

A

hardships

hardships she had undergone for the sake of her religion; putting on the most enthusiastical and faintish countenance, entertained them with miraculous stories; finding their circumstances not likely to serve her purpose, she next morning took leave, promising to call upon them when she got possession of her large estate, make a considerable present, and likewise settle on them an annuity for their lives.

From the miller's she proceeded to the house of Richard Frith, at a place called Seven-Oaks, in the said Parish of Great Budworth; a freeholder, and a man of some property of his own, upon which he and his family lived decently. She related to him her misfortunes on account of her being a Protestant, calling herself by the name of the Viscountess Wilbrihammon, &c. as she gave in her examination to me; with the addition of having 40,000l. in the bank, three large halls belonging to her, several manors and estates, all which she should take possession of in the following month of May. Mr. Frith, believing the whole to be true, sends her to his son Richard, at Crowton, about four miles distant from his own house, and recommends her to be boarded and taken care of. Filled with the expectations of the great rewards to arise therefrom, (her Ladyship having promised to make the whole family gentlefolks, provided they kept her concealed, and every thing she had said a profound secret, until her birth-day) here she lived a retired life, was furnished with money to cloath her, and was speedily equipped in a genteel manner, a neat riding habit, hat, blue feather, cockade, gold band and tassel, the same she appeared in at Coventry, as mentioned in the introduction; the best of wines procured for her, with a genteel table. She continues a considerable time in security, diverting herself and the family with music, singing, &c. The letters, &c. * that passed during that period, are in the Methodist stile; from these letters, the family were of that sect; honest, well-meaning, innocent people, who unfortunately were taken-in by this dissembling impostress.

In

* See the letters No. 5, 6, and 7.

In the month of February, she prevails on young Frith to take her into the county of Westmoreland, under pretence of viewing her estates in that county. Upon their arrival at Kendal, she dismissed him, under a pretence of secrecy, and appointed him to meet her upon a certain day. It appears she had been some time before at Brough, where she had deceived by false pretences the family of an attorney in that town; but becoming suspected by the people in the neighbourhood, had left the place: She imposed on her hospitable friend, (who confided in this base deceiver) by pretending to have interest with Lord Albemarle to procure his son-in-law a lieutenancy in the army.* At the time fixed upon, Frith meets her at Kendal, and with great joy takes her back to his family: Soon after he hath a daughter born, to whom she stands godmother, and the child is baptized by the name of Sarah-Charlotte-Wilbraham-Irving Frith.† She had assured poor Frith she was engag'd to a Honourable Mr. Irving, and to whom she was to be married: The whole family placed such a firm and implicit faith in her story, that they served her at her meals upon their knees. She pretended to so nice and delicate an education, they washed her hands, face, &c. believed every strange account she related, looked upon her as an angel sent from heaven under divine inspiration, to promote and raise their family to the highest honour and greatness: On young Frith she conferred the honour of steward of her estates, with an appointment of two hundred per annum:§ In short, she commanded the whole family in the stile of a princess. Having continued at Crowton until the first of May, preparations are made for her journey to London, and young Frith her steward presents her Ladyship, being her birthday, with a letter of congratulation, and a poetical epistle, on the occasion:‡ In a few days after, they set out for London, to take possession of her estates, and the large sums she pretended to have in the funds, and to put young Frith in possession of his stewardship.

I found no journal of their proceedings upon the road; but a large bill of expences at a principal inn they took up their lodgings at,

* See the letters, No. 1, 2, and 3.

† See Letters, No. 6, and 7.

§ See Letter No. 6.

‡ See Letter, &c. No 9.

at, where they continued the 10th, 11th and 12th of May, when my Lady Viscountess gave her steward the slip, and left him to pay the reckoning, after a fruitless search after his sweet soul, divine and most heavenly fair lady, who left him penniless, as she had left his family at home. Having sent down his horse to Crowton, he was obliged to trip it back on foot, a journey of near 200 miles, there to relate his folly and disappointment to his credulous family and friends.

Thus ended the Comedy of Errors this family and neighbourhood had been drawn into, by a woman who appeared to me hardly capable of acting one line in the whole farce.



Here follow the Copies of the several Letters which were found upon her.

L E T T E R, No. 1.

S I R,

Dublin, 5th February, 1766.

I AM favoured with yours of the 19th of last month, and have communicated the contents to your son and daughter, who seem sensible of the many and great favours you have from time to time conferred upon them, and I must do them the justice to say, they are as uniform and regular in their conduct as you yourself can desire; nor would they have troubled you for a remittance, had not the dearness of the place, and the sickness of the family (in which they lost a fine boy) rendered it absolutely necessary. I have so great an opinion of the œconomy of your worthy daughter, that she would not on any account have troubled you on this occasion, had it not been for the distresses of her family, which have multiplied their expences on that account. They assure me that twenty pounds will not only pay all their debts, but be sufficient to pay the expence of the next march, which I expect will come on in April. As to purchasing the lieutenantcy

nancy for your son-in-law, you are the best judge as to the expediency of that matter: This advantage would accrue from it, that if at any time he should be inclinable to go out on half-pay, he would get 300l. difference, which would be an advantage to his children. But in the whole, I think the more you can secure for Mrs. Milbourne and her children, the better; life being so very precarious, that prudence would direct any one not to risk too much on a single life.

Mr. Milbourne informs me that his assignees are John Hetherington of Brampton, John Ewert of the same, and Robert Relton of Neubican-Hall. If you think it necessary for your son-in-law to come over at the next general election to vote for Sir James Lowther, he shall have my leave: Perhaps it might get him a lieutenancy, which would be better than buying one.

I have nothing further to add, but that I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

JOHN BARLOW.

To

Mr. Robert Hudson,

Attorney at Law,

At Brough-under-Stainmore,

In Westmoreland,

England.

No. 2.

Honoured Lady,

Crowton, 18th February, 1766.

YOUR much esteemed favour of the 7th Inst. we did not receive until the 17th. However it was matter of the greatest consolation to myself and family to hear from you.

I cannot express with what pleasure we read your letter over, especially that part of it where you so generously comply with what we most ardently desire; that is, that you will bless us with your good company and heavenly conversation.

I note the contents of your letter, and every thing that is mentioned therein shall be punctually performed to the best of my power.

B

If

If it please God to give me life, I intend to be at the house where we lodged at Kendal, next Monday night without fail.

If you would chuse to have me to meet you at any place nearer to Kendal, please to leave me directions at Kendal where you would have me to meet you, and I will bring a horse for you to whatever place you chuse: But if I do not find directions at Kendal to come further, I shall wait there for you till you come to me.

I can assure you, honoured Lady, that there is not one person here that knows any more who you are, than they did before you left this place. The letter that was inclosed to me, have put carefully into the post-office. My father and mother, Christian and aunt Glover, my dear wife and sister-in-law, all desire me to mention them in the kindest manner possible to you; and be confident that if I can serve you in any thing, neither day or night shall be wanting.

I shall fetch you, please God, with ten times as much pleasure as I took you away, and as soon as I can get a sight of you, if either money, or any thing else that lies in my power to furnish you with, is wanted, it shall be at your immediate command.

I shall be extremely glad if it please God that I may find you at Kendal, &c. next Monday night in perfect health; and believe dear and honoured Lady, it is my constant prayer, that I may have it in my power to prove myself, honoured Lady,

Your most faithful,

most humble,

and most obedient Servant,

RICHARD FRITH.

I hope you will excuse my writing, as I wrote it in the cabin as I was going down in a flat to Liverpool, and was in great haste to get it ready for the post, and am for want of a better obliged to write with as bad a pen as I would wish to handle.

To the Right Honourable

Viscountess Lady W.

To be left at Mr. Robert Hudson's,

Attorney at Law, in Brough,

Westmoreland.

With care and speed.

No.

No. 3.

Dear Honoured Lady.

Crowton, 18th February, 1766.

WITH what pleasure did we receive the letter from your dear hands, and glad to hear that you got safe to your journey's end; and be assured dear Lady there is nothing in this world as we in our poor way can do to oblige you, as shall be wanting in us; and am rejoiced to think of enjoying your dear and agreeable company so long with us: It was no small grief to me to part when we when we did: I believe we have let no day pass without having some discourse concerning you. My sister came home last Tuesday, and found me very well, in which state I remain, with my little family, blessed be God for it; and hopes in the Lord that these few lines of mine will find you in the same. Dear Lady, the thoughts of you being here makes me think very little of what I have to suffer, and begs you will not delay no longer than you can help, for I shall be very uneasy till you come. My sister sends her compliments to you. Dear lady, excuse the freedom I take, and believe me to be your ever humble servant at all commands, till death.

To

ELIZ. FRITH.

The Right Honourable Viscountess Lady W.

To be left at Mr. Robert Hudson's,

Attorney at Law, in Brough,

Westmoreland.

With care and speed.

Honoured Lady.

Crowton-Hall, 11th April, 1766.

AS heaven's peculiar favour do combine
 To bless his servants with a friend divine;
 Let us with joyful hearts his goodness praise,
 And thankful tribute pay him all our days:
 The heavenly grace your Ladyship imparts,
 I hope is deeply rooted in our hearts.
 God by your favours deigns to interpose,
 And lift our souls above our impious foes,
 Henceforth therefore may th' Almighty Pow'rs
 Blessings on you bestow in never-ceasing showers;

Oh!

Oh! may you happy be, and always blest!
 Of ev'ry grace, of ev'ry wish possess'd!
 May plenty dissipate your worldly cares,
 And smiling peace bless your revolving years,
 And may your honour'd father loving, tender prove;
 And friends unnumber'd join t' express their love.
 This, honour'd Lady, is the fervent prayer
 Of your well-wisher, and your friend sincere.

To RICHARD FRITH, Esq;
 The Right Honourable Viscountess Lady
 Wilbrihamman, at Croustone-Hall,
 Cheshire.

No. 4.

Dear Lady,

Coventry, March 2, 1766.

WE received your letter with a great deal of pleasure, being glad to hear that your Ladyship is got better, but very sorry to hear that you have been so ill, but hope these lines will find you in perfect good health, as we are all at this instant, bless God for it, we have have longed to hear from your Ladyship before, to hear of your health, likewise to know how you got down, and hope that once more if your Ladyship should come this way if you thought proper to have the happiness of your sweet company being so good and delightful to us, and are both most highly obliged to your Ladyship concerning my son what you mentioned in your letter and leave it wholly to your goodness to do as you shall think most proper, to conclude with humble duty's to you and David gives his compliments to you, from

Your humble Servants,

JAMES and ELIZ. BOTT.

P. S. We beg the favour of a line or two the first opportunity.

To
 The Right Honourable Viscountess
 Lady Willbrihamman.

I Shall

I Shall conclude this adventure at Great Budworth, by an extract from a letter.

“ She carried her scheme (says the writer) to such a pitch as was scarcely ever recorded; the half of which is impossible to relate. They dressed and washed her, and did every other individual thing for her, she pretending she could not wash her own face, nor dress herself. She received letters almost every post, and pretended they came from great families; all these things were carried on with the greatest cunning, for certainly no persons were ever so imposed upon as the Fritths, with this notorious Impostress; for they believed all she said, and said she had no fault, but being too rich; and whatever she commanded was immediately done, even to kneeling before her.

— — —
The following is a Specimen of her Scholarship.

by the Hourdour of L^d. W. } May 25th anno Dommine 1766.

John and Penneheatlpe Hill of Stratsead Browher whou as had the Misssourten & in Tread Dus her by Reelleat to me that the Som os one 100 pound woldd Seat him clear to have the Seme Brow Hows AGean as Stratfourd---I have Promiaft by my Woord to Healp tham un the Seame ACeations un the tweanty sifth Day os May in amo Domine one thoushand Seven Hounddriead & Sixty Six By noing os them to Be in Good Creaddiote In the Sead Stratsourd near London &c. &c. &c.

THE EXPLANATION.

By the order of Lady W. May 25th, Anno Domini 1766.

JOHN and Penelope Hill, of Stratford, brewer, who hath had a misfortune, and in trade, does hereby relate to me that the sum of one hundred pounds would set him clear to have the same brew-house again of Stratford. I have promised by my word to help them on the same occasions on the 25th day of May, Anno Domini one thousand seven hundred and sixty-six, by knowing of them to be in good credit in the said Stratford, near London, &c. &c. &c.

Lady WILBRIHAMMON.

C

LETTER

LETTER, No. 5.

Honoured Lady,

Crowton, March 25, 1766.

YOURS of the 24th I received, which gave me much pleasure to think you dear Lady bestow love on one that is not worthy of it; but how thankful ought we to be to our good God who hath brought such mighty things to pass, and hath promised never to leave nor forsake those that firmly rely on him, which the Lord grant we all may. Dear Lady, happy do we think ourselves to enjoy your blessed and good company, and edifying conversation, which may save the souls of many; and how happy shall we think ourselves when we are fixed near so good and true a christian. Happy will that dear and good Mr. Irving be above all mankind when blessed with such a bride, as no doubt but you will be as happy with that worthy gentleman as your Ladyship could wish: The Lord grant it may not be long before you have a happy sight of each other, which is my sincere wish, and ever will offer up my prayers to my good God for you both, whom the Lord hath sent to be our friends and benefactors, and to raise us up above our enemies, who have been ready to devour us. Dearest and best of Ladies, excuse my freedom that I have taken with you, and believe it comes from a poor but sincere and true heart, that could do any thing that lies in my power to serve you, by night or day, and think myself happy to serve so worthy a Lady; others have had a very great loss of so good a christian, but their loss has been for our gain, both in this world and another, which I hope we shall ever acknowledge to our good God and your worthy Ladyship for all things we enjoy. Dear Lady accept my humble thanks for the honour you're pleased to confer upon my sister, that of being your Ladyship's housekeeper, which I hope will be her study to discharge as she ought, and strive to serve God, and then it would give me much pleasure, as I wish her well-doing as well as my own. Dear Lady, I have nothing more to add, but my prayers to God for your and Mr. Irving's good health. So rests your humble servant till death, at all commands,

To

ELIZ. FRITH.

To the Right Honourable Viscountess

Lady Wilbrihamman,

At Crowton.

No.

No. 6.

Honoured Lady,

Crowton, 26 March, 1766.

HOW shall I express my gratitude? How shall I mention my my thankfulness for the blessings you are pleased to heap upon me and my family?

The honour you now do me, of residing a small season at my house, gives me more pleasure than you can comprehend; and it is matter of the greatest consolation to me that you are pleased to make choice of me, and esteem me worthy to be entrusted with your affairs, and serving you as a steward, which I hope I shall be able to do (with the help of God) to your Ladyship's entire satisfaction. I hope also that my best endeavours to serve you will always be pleasing and agreeable to that honoured, that happy person, whom you esteem worthy of yourself.

The honour which you intend to do me, in standing godmother, and Esqr. Irving godfather for my little babe which yet is unborn, these honours, with those you intend to confer upon the young child, fill my heart with gratitude in such a manner as I am not able to express.

I can see plainly that it is God's good pleasure to raise us by your favours, and to deliver us out of the hands of our enemies.

I hope these lines will find your Ladyship in good health, and that you and Esqr. Irving may speedily enjoy what you most ardently wish for; which that you may, is the hearty desire of him who blesteth his God that he hath the honour to be,

Your Ladyship's

most obedient,

and most humble Servant,

RICHARD FRITH.

To

The Right Honourable Viscountess

Lady Wilbrihamman, at

Crowton,

Cheshire.

No.

No. 7.

Honoured Madam,

Liverpool, April 15, 1766.

I Was not a little surprized and rejoiced to have the favour of a line from under your hand, especially from a Lady so highly favoured of the Almighty. Madam, when I read the contents of your loving letter, my heart was filled with gratitude and thanks, to think of the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, to meditate on the love of a divine Redeemer, and the blessed hope of everlasting life, which awaits us, and which by the purchase of Christ's blood being shed for us, we shall shortly be put in possession of, is matter of great rejoicing to think that when this earthly house of our tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens: Therefore my loving sister, as I make bold to call you, continue ye in my love, as Christ exhorts his disciples, and run with patience the race that is set before you, looking unto Jesus, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Set your affections on things above, for on the earth is no lasting, no real abiding satisfaction; for man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward, as the holy scriptures do declare, and our experience confirms, as the holy apostle advises us, wherefore comfort one another with these words; so would I comfort myself and others, that our light afflictions, which are but momentary, shall work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, so comforting the expression, that one would hardly think our suffering in this life worth our notice; the exalted happiness it brings to our mind, is far above all temporal felicity, whilst we look not at things temporal but at things eternal, to think of shortly being welcomed into the everlasting kingdom of light, and love, and glory, with Come ye blessed children of my Father into the joy of your Lord. And now, honoured Madam, may the Almighty, who has the keeping of all hearts in his hand, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ our Lord, who at his glorious appearance shall change our vile bodies, and to fashion them like unto his glorious body, according

according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself. Pray acquaint my son and daughter, and daughter Martha that we are all in a very good state of health at present, hoping these few lines will find you in the same. I rejoice to hear of your being well inclined, and I intreat you to press forward for the prize of your high calling of God in Christ. I hope by this reacheth you my daughter Elizabeth is safely delivered. I hope my daughter Susannah is very well in health, and I would be very glad to hear from them. So no more at present, but our love to you all; and my blessing to my children,

From your friend and well-wisher till death,

MARTHA HOULBROOK.

Tuesday 11 o'clock.

P. S. Pray do me the favour of sending me a line from you at all opportunities.

For

The Honourable Lady Wilbrihamman,
At Mrs. Elizabeth Frith's, at Crowton,
In Cheshire,
near Middlewich.

With Care.

No. 8.

Honourable Lady,

YOUR favour of the 11th Inst. came safe to hand, and am sorry any thing I should write to you should affront you in the least; I do not remember writing any thing touching your conduct but what was good, nor could any one say any thing upon that account whilst you was here, if they did you justice. As to my writing to Mr. Frith, your Ladyship might see the reason, because the letter was returned, therefore I thought to inclose it would be the safest method. I return you thanks for the thought and great concern you shew to me and my family in general. I do assure your Ladyship it gave me not a little concern to hear the reflections people gave out against you: But it raises my spirits when I may hope to have the pleasure of seeing your ladyship in Brough again so soon as

D

you

you are pleased to mention, when I hope you'll shew them that you are a different person from what they have represented you. Your Ladyship is pleased to mention your having received a letter from Lord Albemarle upon son Millbourne's account: Pray is there any hopes of his being raised to a lieutenancy, and what is his Lordship pleased to say in his letter? I should be glad of a copy of it; and if you could return Mr. Barlow's if you have it, I would shew it to a friend of mine. Pray dear Lady is Mr. Irwin dead, or has he changed his mind: I have been uneasy since you wrote you had lost him. I think we mentioned something about your birth-day when you was at Brough; pray when is it? that we may remember you, though absent. My wife longs to see your Ladyship, and is in great spirits to think of having you once more at Brough; and if you succeed for Mr. Milbourne, I hope that favour will at all times be most gratefully acknowledged by both your humble Servant,

ROBERT HUDSON,
And all my Family.

Brough, } I hope your pappa was well
14th April, } when you heard from him.
1766. }

N. B. As soon as you have any answer from Lord Albemarle I should be glad to hear from you; and heartily wish you a good journey to London, and that you may find all well there. My daughter Nancy has been with captain Hughgouin's lady a fortnight at Bernard-Castle: But I will send her yours this day.

To
The Right Honourable Viscountess
Lady Wilbrihaman,
To the care of Mr. Richard Frith, Junior,
In Crowton,
These.

No.

No. 9.

Honoured Lady,

Crowton, May 1, 1766.

I Hope I shall stand excused for the liberty I now take of presenting the following lines to your Ladyship, as they are the product of a truly sincere and respectful heart towards you. I heartily wish you a speedy and happy sight of that pious, that worthy gentleman, Eqr. Irving, and if ever it be his happy happy lot to be your husband, may he (like you) make it his study to do always that which is righteous in the sight of God, and then truly you will enjoy all the happiness this world can afford you; which that you may, is the hearty desire of your Ladyship's

Most obedient,

and most humble Servant,

RICHARD FRITH, Esqr.

Rejoice ye charming nymphs, ye fellow-swains,
 Rejoice ye birds, advance your sweetest strains,
 Rejoice ye nobles all without control,
 This is the birth-day of the sweetest soul,
 This is the birth-day of th' most charming fair
 That ever breath'd in nature's common air.
 Rejoice! ye charming choristers advance your voice;
 Rejoice! Rejoice! again I say, Rejoice!
 Now you're arriv'd at th' age of twenty-one,
 No virtuous conduct need you, but your own:
 Virtue with ev'ry mental grace your God has given,
 Which is sufficient t' guard you safe to heaven;
 Therefore let us with one united prayer
 Solicit heaven for your continuance here:
 That many happy birth-days you may see
 Of yours, and all your prosp'rous progeny.
 This is the happy day, therefore Rejoice!
 Rejoice! Rejoice! again I say Rejoice!

Farther

Farther Accounts of Lady Wilbrihammon, &c. &c.

UPON my arrival in London, I immediately wrote to Mr. Jackson, and received the following answer.

S I R,

“ I was sorry I was from home when your letter of last night came to my house.----Such a young woman as you describe did come to me last winter, pretending to be a daughter of Lord Molyneux.---I suspected her of being a cheat---and she proved to be a most notorious one.---In countenance and person she exactly answers your account; and if it is the same person, she has a speck upon one eye. I have heard of her since her coming to me, by another gentleman, to whom she appeared as Miss Wilbraham.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble Servant,

GEO: JACKSON.”

Navy-Office,
19th June; 1766.

To

John Hewitt, Esqr.

Blue Boar and George,

Holbourn.

Desirous of having her history from Mr. Jackson, I waited upon him, from whom I received the following account.

“ That in the preceding winter, some little time before dinner, a hackney coachman drove into the court, and to the door of Mr. Jackson's house: The driver alighted, and after he had very furiously knocked at the door, a servant came out. The coachman told him, a Lady in the coach desired to speak to Mr. Jackson: The servant replied, his master was out; upon hearing of which her Ladyship desired to know if Mrs. Jackson was within: Being answered in the negative,

gative, she ordered the coachman to tell the servant she was ill, and beg the favour she might be permitted to alight for a minute or two; which being told to Mrs. Jackson, she was admitted into the house. Putting on a sorrowful countenance, with feigned sighs, &c. affecting illness, and pretending to be in a weak state, desired permission to sit down; which being permitted to do, she addresseth herself to Mrs. Jackson, that she was the Honourable Miss Mollineux, a daughter of Lord Mollineux, and a near relation to Lord Derby; that a captain Jackson of the India Company, who was, as she was informed, a relation of Mr. Jackson's, was a particular friend of her late mama's; that she wanted to see the captain, she being then in a distressful state from the ill treatment of her papa, who had obliged her to leave him privately upon the account of religion, &c. and that if she could but see the captain, she knew he would be a great friend to her for her mama's sake. Mr. Jackson coming in with company, being informed that a Miss Mollineux, daughter of Lord Mollineux, was in the house, he immediately went to see her, and heard her melancholy account; he desired to be excused for a few minutes, and he would wait upon her again, having some business upon hand with his friends he had brought with him; and that he would send a servant to look up the captain, who was a friend of his. Upon dinner being ready, he or Mrs. Jackson desired her by the name of Mollineux to dine with the company; but her Honor replied, that her sorrows were so great, that so much company would be too much for her spirits; upon which Mr. Jackson called for Miss Jackson his daughter, to bear her company until dinner was over, and dine with her (the Lady) by themselves. Mr. Jackson as soon as at liberty attended her Ladyship, and the messenger returning without finding the capt. she was asked to drink tea; and Miss Jackson, at her papa's request, sat down to her harpsichord to entertain Miss Mollineux with some pieces of musick; when her Impudence says to Mrs. Jackson, "I suppose, madam, Miss can sing too." Miss Jackson being requested, with her mama's, &c. leave, entertained Miss Mollineux with a song or two. Her Ladyship finding herself secure and lucky in the plan she had formed in her mind, by the

captain's not being to be found, began seemingly to recover her spirits; and says to Mrs. Jackson, that notwithstanding the then difficulties she was in, she had no doubt of overgetting all her sorrows, and being a great Lady; for her mama said she was born with a mark of greatness upon her: Mrs. Jackson asking what mark that was, she answered an Imperial Crown upon her belly; whether she shewed it or not, I do not recollect; neither can I tell what she obtained from the family: But getting late in the evening, and she taking no notice of her intentions to leave, Mrs. Jackson informed her it was not likely the captain would come at so late an hour, and that they had no room to lodge her; which obliged Miss Mollineux to take leave sooner than intended, her designed plan was in a great measure disconcerted, and she decamped without her errand."

This was the gentleman's account to whom she directed me for a character.

Upon inquiring after her Ladyship's proceedings on her flight from Coventry, I found she had steered her course for Banbury; had taken-in by her usual art a very humane gentleman, a Mr. C. for about ten guineas, and then proceeded to London. Her numerous frauds in and about the Capital, I had not leisure to collect: But in the following year I received a letter from the Mayor of St. Albans, and an account of her being in the bridewell of that borough. The account given me of her adventures there, are, as nearly as I can recollect, as followeth.

" In the month of July 1767, she came in the dusk of the evening, attended by a person in livery, whom she called her second coachman, to the house of Lord Spencer. His Lordship being absent, she addressed herself to the steward, as being particularly acquainted with his Lordship; that she was Lady Wilmington, and Countess of Normandy; that she had met with the misfortune of having her carriage broke down on the road to St. Alban's; that she had left her broken carriage on the road with one of her attendants, and the other she had brought with her; that she was much disappointed at his Lordship being from home, being an intimate acquaintance

acquaintance of her papa and mama's. The steward heard her tale with all attention, and believing it true, requested her Ladyship to take a bed, and provided an elegant supper.----The non-appearance of her equipage, her story getting into the town, the inhabitants having rendered themselves ridiculous by former credulity,* a speedy enquiry was made after the broken carriage; and more substantial evidence was required of her Ladyship being the real person of quality, and agreeable to the title she assumed, which she upon a minute examination was found wanting in. The non-appearance of her Ladyship's retinue on the road, the broken carriage and baggage, begat strong suspicions: And after waiting a reasonable time for her to produce the indisputable evidence wanted, she was convicted, and committed by the Right Worshipful the Mayor to the house of correction, as a Vagrant and Impostress.

That the curious reader may have every circumstance relating to Lady Wilbrihammon, &c. that hath come to my knowledge, I shall give them that satisfaction.----She was a menial servant in the kitchen of George-Lewis Scott, Esq; after her Adventure at St. Alban's, and other places, was transported to America, where she imposed on the credulous, and pretended to be allied to the Royal Family, calling herself the Princess Louisa, producing some valuables as jewels, supposed to be taken from one of the royal palaces.

* In the month of April 1738, two bakers of St. Albans, going with bread to Coney, saw a poor miserable girl, half naked, lying on the side of a ditch, and hearing her groans, they went up to her; she appeared to be so very weak that they led and supported her to an alehouse near the turnpike, where they left her to the care of the publican's wife. She seeing her in a dangerous condition, being almost starved and emaciated, sent for a Mr. Humphries, a very able Apothecary and Surgeon in the town, who by proper cordials gave her relief. She was then put to bed, and great care was taken of her for some time, when her strength began to return, and she was very visibly amended in her health.

In the mean time her story became publickly known in the town, and the most considerable people of the place went to see her.—The girl, who had the most perfect innocence in her face, and was about 19 years of age, behaved with the utmost decency, and became the general object of compassion; and as she grew better was invited

to the houses of the principal people of the town to tell her story, which was heard with the utmost attention and amazement.

The account she gave of herself is as followeth:—That her name was Mary Ramsay, born in Hull, her father a very eminent surgeon and man-midwife, lately dead, who had left her to the care of his brother, with a fortune of seven thousand pounds; that she had lived with her uncle in a manner becoming her circumstances, and about a month before that time her uncle had signified to her his intentions of sending her up to London for education, and accordingly gave her a letter to a gentleman (whose name she had forgot) who kept a school, with whom she was to board and lodge, and by whom she was to be instructed in the several accomplishments necessary to the formation of a young lady of fashion; that he obliged her to travel in the common waggon; that she was dressed in a riding habit and jockey cap, and went therein with other company as far as Stamford, where, stopping to dine, she accidentally dropped the above-mentioned letter in the inn yard, which being found by a person who also was a passenger with her, and to whom she had related her story, she was by him persuaded to open the letter, which she did, and found that directed to the school-mistress to be only the case and cover to another letter, directed to captain ——— (she could not recollect his name, but was sure he was a sea captain); the contents of which letter was to this effect:

“ Sir,

“ The person who brings you this, is the young woman I told you of. I acknowledge the receipt of half the money agreed on, and expect the remainder as soon as convenient.”

This, she continued, was signed by her uncle; that the person hereupon persuaded her to return to Hull and expose her uncle, which she promised to do, but dreading to see a man who was capable of such projects, she took a resolution to elope from the waggoner, whom she now looked upon as a confederate with her uncle, and to travel on foot to London, where she said she had a sister, married to a man of great fortune in the county of Suffolk, and a barrister at law; that accordingly she gave the waggoner the slip, and began her journey through bye ways and lanes; that after a day or two, her money being all gone, she sold her jockey cap to an old woman, and afterwards parted with her riding habit, in exchange for an old gown and some trifle of money, which enabled her to reach London, where not being able to find her sister Cooke, she resolved to return to Hull. She accordingly set out without a farthing of money, or even one necessary for so long a journey; when after two days, being weary, and in want of the common support of nature, she was found in the condition described above.

This story, wild and extravagant as it was, gained an universal belief!—Compassion and pity took root in every heart; and poor Miss Ramsay was the topic of every one's conversation.

The Mayor of the town, a very humane and good man, was so moved at this melancholy tale, that he recommended her to his wife's protection; who introducing her to other ladies, a subscription was set on foot to cloath the young lady, and send her home suitable to her rank. She was now put into better garb, and lived at the Mayor's house:

house: Happy was the family who could entertain Miss Ramsay, and hear her story, which she told so very well, so glibly, and with such amazing facility, shedding tears at the most affecting parts of it, and never varying in the least circumstance, that not a soul doubted of the reality of the relation.

At this time a gentleman, an inhabitant of the town, who had been absent some time, returned from London, and being informed of this extraordinary young lady, suspected the story, and declared his opinion publicly; but in return met with that contempt too frequently attending endeavours to stem the torrent of infatuation, and to bring men back to the use of their right reason.

All argued with Mr. Mayor, Mr. Alderman ———, Mr. Alderman ———, &c. but to no purpose: She was so young, so innocent, she could not frame such a story herself—it was impossible!—so really good, so truly pious, her story must be true—they would have it true—and therefore it was true.

Miss Ramsay was now in the zenith of her happiness, when this very singular gentleman recollecting that he had an acquaintance in Hull, a man of probity and honour, wrote to him, informing him of the particulars, and desiring him to make all due enquiry, and acquaint him with what he should learn concerning Miss Ramsay, her father, uncle, and family.

The answer received was to this effect: That a surgeon of the name of Ramsay had formerly lived in the neighbourhood of Hull, who was very poor all his life-time, and who was confined for debt in the castle of Lincoln, and died there about ten years before: That he had two daughters, abandoned wretches, and common prostitutes, who strolled about the country under various and fallacious pretences: That upon the strictest enquiry, he could not find Ramsay had a brother; and that if the people of St. Albans would pass her to Hull, she would there meet with her deserts.

This letter was read to the gentlemen of the town, and to the girl herself, who said she knew the gentleman who wrote it very well, and that he was a particular friend of her uncle's, and an associate in the trepanning scheme before-mentioned.

This was sufficient for her friends; they all agreed it was so; it was to no purpose to talk to them; they were convinced of the poor dear girl's innocence, and the injustice done to her; and they resolved to protect her.

The Mayor however was advised himself to write to Hull for greater certainty: He accordingly addressed himself to two gentlemen there, who confirmed the account before received. He was then convinced of his error, read the two letters to the girl, and admonished her to confess the truth: She became fullen, and would make no reply, upon which the Mayor committed her to the bridewell of the town: There, without friends to encourage her wickedness, and support her falsehood; without confederates to countenance her guilt; she confessed the whole to be false, from the beginning to the end. She was publicly whipped, and passed away to Hull.

F I N I S.

ERRATA. The Contents of Page 9, were intended by the Editor to have preceded Letter No. 1.

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the world is not a perfect machine,
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THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE
THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE

